

‘Good Days at Quetta’: Australians at the Indian Army Staff College 1908 - 1942

Since the establishment of the Prussian War Academy in the early 19th century, it has been common practice for modern countries to devote significant attention to the development of a highly educated intellectual elite within the military, with future leaders being carefully selected and given advanced education in Staff Colleges. Australia did not develop its own Staff College until 1947, relying instead on the imperial relationship to furnish military post-graduate education. Selected officers were sent to the British Army Staff College at Camberley and to the Indian Army Staff College at Quetta for specialist training between 1908 and 1942. This paper will focus on the Australian-Indian military relationship and will examine the role the Indian Army Staff College played in the shaping of the Australian military elite. Several notable leadership figures of the Australian Army including Field Marshal Sir Thomas Blamey and Major General Vasey attended the Indian Army Staff College and it will be argued that although the overall number of graduates was small, this imperial linkage is significant due to the small size of the permanent Australian forces in this period.

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